

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 SANTIA 00055 051954Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /079 W
-----077601 052009Z /46
P 051822Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7693

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SANTIAGO 0055

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV SHUM CI
SUBJECT: CHURCH JOINS ANTI-PLEBISCITE RANKS

REF: SANTIAGO 10386

1. SUMMARY: IN A LETTER TO PRESIDENT PINOCHET, THE CHILEAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' LEADERSHIP ASKED THAT THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION BE EITHER CANCELLED OR POSTPONED. WHILE OPPOSING THE UN'S CHILE RESOLUTION, THE CHURCH LEADERS CALLED FOR "PROFOUND REFLECTION" ON THE JANUARY 4 VOTE AND CAUTIONED THE GOC NOT TO DIVIDE THE PEOPLE INTO "PATRIOTS" AND "ANTI-PATRIOTS." TWO CONSERVATIVE BISHOPS BROKE RANKS AND PRAISED PINOCHET FOR DEFENDING THE COUNTRY'S NATIONAL DIGNITY. PINOCHET AND THE JUNTA HAVE ANSWERED THE BISHOPS' LETTER. END SUMMARY.

2. A JANUARY 1 LETTER TO PRESIDENT PINOCHET FROM THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S PERMANENT EPISCOPAL COMMITTEE, THE SEVEN-MEMBER ELECTED ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING THE COUNTRY'S BISHOPS RECOMMENDED THAT THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION BE EITHER CALLED OFF OR AT LEAST POSTPONED. THE BISHOPS SAID THAT, WHILE THEY OPPOSED THE UN'S STANCE -- WHICH THEY CONSIDERED DISCRIMINATORY AGAINST CHILE -- THE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 SANTIA 00055 051954Z

POPULACE IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY INFORMED ON THE ISSUE. OTHER PROBLEMS FORESEEN BY THE BISHOPS: THE WORDING OF THE PROPOSITION FOR VOTE IS AMBIGUOUS AND INCORPORATES MORE THAN ONE QUESTION, WHICH IF POSED SEPARATELY WOULD PERHAPS YIELD DIFFERENT ANSWERS; THE UNILATERAL PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN REPRESENTS A FORM OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE WHICH DETRACTS FROM THE VALUE AND MEANING OF THE CONSULTATION; THE EXISTENCE OF

THE STATE OF EMERGENCY RESTRICTS THE AIRING OF ALL OPTIONS.
THE CHURCH LEADERS STATE THAT FOR THE GOOD OF CHILE A SEARCH
SHOULD BE DIRECTED AT UNITING THE PEOPLE, NOT AT DIVIDING
THEM INTO "PATRIOTS" AND "ANTI-PATRIOTS."

3. IN A RARE DISPLAY OF PUBLIC DISAGREEMENT, TWO CON-
SERVATIVE BISHOPS, ELADIO VICUNA AND EMILIO TAGLE, FROM
PUERTO MONTT AND VALPARAISO RESPECTIVELY, APPLAUDED THE
NATIONAL CONSULTATION. THEY CALLED IT A "PATRIOTIC DEFENSE
OF NATIONAL DIGNITY" AND LABELLED THE UN RESOLUTION ON CHILE
"FOREIGN INTROMISSION." TAGLE PREDICTED JANUARY 3 AN "OVER-
WHELMING" YES VOTE FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

4. PRESIDENT PINOCHET ANSWERED THE BISHOPS IN A PRIVATE
("RESERVADO") LETTER. HE TOLD THE PRESS JANUARY 3: "WHEN
I WANT TO HELP SOMEONE, I DO NOT MAKE THINGS PUBLIC, BE-
CAUSE THAT IS MAKING POLITICS." OTHER MEMBERS OF THE
JUNTA ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT OF THE BISHOPS' LETTER.
GENERAL LEIGH, WHO HAS LET HIS OWN OPPOSITION TO THE
PINOCHET PLEBISCITE REACH THE PUBLIC, "DULY NOTED AND
APPRECIATED" THE POINTS MADE BY THE CHURCH LEADERSHIP.

5. COMMENT: THE CHURCH'S MAINSTREAM PROBABLY KNEW THAT
ITS EFFORTS TO STAY THE PLEBISCITE WOULD BE IN VAIN.
NEVERTHELESS, BY QUESTIONING THE MORAL VALIDITY OF THE
PROCESS THE CHURCH IS ON FIRM GROUND. ITS STAND MAY EN-
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 SANTIA 00055 051954Z

COUARGE SOME CATHOLIC VOTERS INTO CASTING A NEGATIVE VOTE.
LANDAU

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CHURCH STATE RELATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SANTIA00055
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780008-1158
Format: TEL
From: SANTIAGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780196/aaaadddd.tel
Line Count: 96
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4bce8be6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 SANTIAGO 10386
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3824078
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHURCH JOINS ANTI-PLEBISCITE RANKS
TAGS: PGOV, SHUM, CI
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4bce8be6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014